

large majority of these sites are shipwrecks, which have taken precedence over landing sites and submerged terrestrial sites in terms of priority of investigation. The former are much more visible, often documented, and frequently cluster in areas of modern navigation. This last factor necessitates their immediate study and salvage as feasible. The archeology of submerged sites is still in its infancy, and will remain so until efforts are made to locate and excavate in the aquatic environment at least a sample of the various site types encountered on land.

In general underwater archeology has lagged somewhat behind upland archeology in the refinement of its methodology. This is due not just to the chronological lag in the implementation of the programs but to the considerable differences in the characteristics of the data base. Underwater archeology requires a manifold increase in time, equipment, and especially manpower over the already labor intensive upland work. But despite this fact, agencies with planning functions - primarily the Underwater Archeology Unit and the Wilmington District - have set out broad program directions. In addition, while universities and museums continue to pursue their interests independently of these agencies, there is recent activity to bring these interests into the planning process.

In the northeastern portion of the North Carolina little underwater archeological activity took place prior to 1977. Up until that time the state's underwater archeology program had focused its attention on the Civil War shipwrecks that clustered around the Wilmington area. The Underwater Archeology Unit's location in the southernmost portion of the state has led to an inventory of submerged archeological sites which does not properly represent the rich array of submerged cultural resources lying in the coastal region of above Cape Lookout. Work conducted in the study area prior to 1979 basically was restricted to three site specific projects: the recovery of the Confederate cannon and associated artifacts from the bottom of the Roanoke River at Fort Branch near Hamilton, North Carolina; the location and investigation of the USS MONITOR off Cape Hatteras; and exploratory dives on three wrecks near Washington, North Carolina. However, recently considerably more attention has been paid to locating and investigating submerged archeological resources above Cape Lookout.

In part, this has been a result of East Carolina University's role in maritime research. Beginning in 1979 the university's history department with the Underwater Archeology Unit, sponsored summer field programs in underwater archeology and maritime historical research. These programs have resulted in intensive underwater investigations in portions of the historic harbors of Bath, Edenton and New Bern. At the same time, in 1981, East Carolina University developed and now offers a post-graduate program in maritime history and underwater research which has been active, primarily through student training exercises, in exploring the waters of northern coastal North Carolina for submerged archeological remains. The University's most recent activities have focused on the Tar and Pamlico Rivers near Washington, North Carolina and the Roanoke and Croatan Sound adjacent to the north end of Roanoke Island. Their presence in the study area offers a local center of expertise for maritime inquiries.